

REMARKS

The claims have been amended to correct improper multiple dependencies and to put the application into better form for examination.

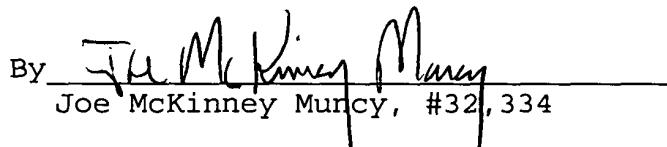
Entry of the above amendments is earnestly solicited. An early and favorable first action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the application by this Amendment.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
Joe McKinney Muncy, #32,334

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

KM/ka
2921-0144P

Attachment(s): VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims have been amended as follows:

4. (Amended) A semi-submersible offshore platform (1) according to [one or more of the preceding claims] claim 1, wherein the offshore platform (1) has four or six columns (4) and a substantially rectangular pontoon (2), and wherein a forward column pair is located on the pontoon with one column thereof on each side of a longitudinal center-line (CL), and an aft column pair is located on the pontoon (2) with one column (4) thereof on each side of the center-line (CL), characterized in that said system of lateral beams (7) is substantially H-shaped-when observed from above-in such a way that the vertical posts of the "H" correspond to two or more longitudinal beams (7a, 7b) extending on each side of said center-line (CL) from the aft column pair to the forward column pair, whilst the horizontal mid-post of the "H" corresponds to one or more transversal beams (7c, 7d, 7e).

6. (Amended) A semi-submersible offshore platform (1) according to [one or more of claims 1-3] claim 1, wherein the offshore platform (1) has four or six columns (4) and a substantially rectangular pontoon (2), and wherein a starboard column pair is located on the pontoon with one column thereof on each side of a transversal midship-line (ML) through the offshore platform (1), and a port column pair is located on the pontoon (2) with one column (4) thereof on each side of said midship-line (ML), characterized in that said system of lateral beams (7) is substantially H-shaped-when observed from above- in such a way that the vertical posts of the "H" correspond to two or more transversal beams (7g, 7h) extending on each side of said midship-line (ML) from the port column pair to the starboard column pair, whilst the horizontal mid-post of the "H" corresponds to one or more of the longitudinal beams (7i, 7j, 7k).

8. (Amended) A semi-submersible offshore platform (1) according to [one or more of claims 1-3] claim 1, wherein the offshore platform (1) has three columns (4) and a substantially triangular pontoon (2), characterized in that said system of lateral beams (7) is substantially T-shaped-when observed from above-in such a way that the horizontal part of the "T" corresponds a first beam (7A) extending between two columns (4), and wherein the vertical part of the "T" corresponds to a second beam (7B) which extends from a third column (4) to a mid-portion (29) of said first beam (7A).

10. (Amended) A semi-submersible offshore platform (1) according to [one or more of the preceding claims] claim 1, characterized in that one or more of the lateral beams (7) are formed as a torsion box (15), said torsion box (15) being wider than a typical beam (7) in the system of lateral beams (7).

13. (Amended) A semi-submersible offshore platform (1) according to [claims 10-12] claim 10, characterized in that the torsion box (15) has a width which corresponds to the width of a column (4) which supports the torsion Box (15).

14. (Amended) A semi-submersible offshore platform (1) according to [claims 10-12] claim 10, characterized in that the torsion box (15) is narrower than a column (4) which supports the torsion box (15), at least one side-wall (16) of the torsion box coinciding with an internal bulkhead (18) in the column (4).